

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 9, 10, 12 and 13 without prejudice. Kindly amend claims 8, 11 and 15, as shown below. Please add new claims 17-31, as set forth below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

**Claim 1 (original):** A user interface framework management system for managing the user interface of a software application, the user interface framework management comprising:

a merged application user interface for receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of a component to be included with the software application;

a unification unit for merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface; and

an identification unit for associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 2 (original):** A user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the merged application user interface placeholder receives a plurality of software application user interface elements.

**Claim 3 (original):** A user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the merged application user interface placeholder receives a plurality of component user interface elements.

**Claim 4 (original):** A user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the identification unit disassociates the component from the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 5 (original):** A method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when installing a component in a software application, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface;

merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface; and

associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 6 (original):** The method claimed in claim 5, wherein the merged application user interface receives a plurality of software application user interface elements.

**Claim 7 (original):** The method claimed in claim 5, wherein the merged application user interface receives a plurality of component user interface elements.

**Claim 8 (currently amended):** ~~A method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when unloading a component from a software application, the method comprising steps of:~~

~~receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface, the component being associated with the component user interface element; and~~

The method claimed in claim 5, further comprising the step of disassociating the component from the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claims 9-10 (canceled)**

**Claim 11 (currently amended):** ~~A method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when reloading a component from a software application, the method comprising steps of:~~

~~receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface, the component being disassociated with the component user interface element; and~~

The method claimed in claim 8, further comprising the step of re-associating the component to [[from]] the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claims 12-13 (canceled)**

**Claim 14 (original):** A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and representing sequences of instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when installing a component in a software application, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface;

merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface; and

associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 15 (currently amended):** Computer-readable media for storing instructions or statements for use in the execution in a computer of a method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when installing a component in a software application, the method comprising steps of:

~~computer of a method for managing the user interface framework of a software application when installing a component in a software application, the method comprising steps of:~~

receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of the component in a merged application user interface;

merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface; and

associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 16 (original):** A computer program product for use in the execution in a computer for creating a user interface framework management system for managing the user interface of a software application, the user interface framework management comprising:

a merged application user interface for receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a component user interface element of a component to be included with the software application;

a unification unit for merging the component user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface; and

an identification unit for associating the component with the component user interface element in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 17 (new):** The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the component is accessible from a plurality of user machines.

**Claim 18 (new):** The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein a plurality of components are customized by a plurality of users, the components and their customizations accessible by users upon loading of the component into the merged application user interface.

**Claim 19 (new):** The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 18, wherein the customized component is hidden from user machines that do not have the component loaded in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 20 (new):** The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the component user interface elements are customizable in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 21 (new):** The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the component is dynamically loadable into the merged application user interface system.

**Claim 22 (new):** The user interface framework management system as claimed in claim 4, wherein the user interface framework management system maintains customizations to components associated and disassociated from the merged application user interface.

**Claim 23 (new):** The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the step of merging is performed dynamically.

**Claim 24 (new):** The method as claimed in claim 5, further comprising the step of allowing a plurality of users to access the merged application user interface.

**Claim 25 (new):** The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

storing associations between components and users;

providing access to shared components associated with different users; and

hiding a shared component from users not associated with the shared component.

**Claim 26 (new):** The method as claimed in claim 5, further comprising the step of maintaining customizations to components merged in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 27 (new):** The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising the step of maintaining customizations to disassociated components.

**Claim 28 (new):** The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the step of disassociating includes the steps of:

traversing merged application user interface elements; and

hiding merged application user interface elements owned by the component.

**Claim 29 (new):** The method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

traversing hidden component user interface elements; and

applying maintained customizations to the re-associated component user interface element.

**Claim 30 (new):** A user interface framework management system for managing the user interface of a software application, the user interface framework management comprising:

a merged application user interface for receiving a software application user interface element of the software application and a tool user interface element of a tool to be included with the software application;

a unification unit for merging the tool user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface, the tool user interface element customizable in the merged application user interface and accessible from a plurality of user machines; and

an identification unit for associating the tool with the tool user interface element in the merged application user interface;

wherein the user interface framework management system associates and disassociates tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface, and maintains customizations of associated and disassociated tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface.

**Claim 31 (new):** A method for managing the user interface framework of software applications when installing tools in a software application, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a software application user interface element of a software application and a tool user interface element of a tool;

merging the tool user interface element with the software user interface element into the merged application user interface;

associating the tool user interface element in the merged application user interface with the tool;

storing associations between a plurality of tools and a plurality of users;

providing access to shared tools associated with different users;  
hiding a tool user interface element from users not associated with the tool;  
maintaining customizations to tool user interface elements merged in the merged  
application user interface;  
disassociating tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface;  
maintaining customizations of the disassociated tool user interface elements;  
re-associating the tool user interface elements in the merged application user interface;  
and  
applying maintained customizations to the re-associated tool user interface elements.